

Never Forgotten | Educational Resources

## Section Five | **On-To-Ottawa!**



# A. On-To-Ottawa! | Discussion Questions:

## Part 1 | The Trek

1. What was the mood amongst the strikers as they left Vancouver? Why might the protestors have felt this way?
2. What was the reception the strikers experienced in Kamloops? How did Evans try to uplift the spirit of the trekkers?
3. Why do you think people in Calgary believed the strikers to be a “rough bunch”? In what ways did the strikers challenge this perception of themselves and their movement?
4. Why did the government feel the need to stop the On-To-Ottawa trek before it reached Ottawa?

## Part 2 | Regina

1. What was the reception the trek received in Regina? How did the Citizens' Emergency Committee help the Trekkers while in Regina?
2. How did the Canadian Government first try to stop the trek in Regina? What was the strikers' response to this effort?
3. What did the delegates sent by Bennett's government propose to the strikers? What did the government hope this delegation would achieve? What was the strikers' response to the delegation's proposal?
4. What leverage did the strikers have to ensure the Canadian government met their demands?

## Part 3 | Meeting the Prime Minister

1. How did Prime Minister Bennett represent the conditions of the camps during the meeting with the strikers?
2. What did Bennett imply when he stated that with the exception of one, all the delegates had been born outside of Canada? How did Jack Cosgrove respond to this comment? What does Bennett's comment imply about Canadian citizenship at that time? How does the view of citizenship in the past conflict with our current view of Canadian citizenship?
3. What was the outcome of the meetings between the Canadian government and the trekkers? How did this outcome affect the situation in Regina?
4. What led to the strikers' decision to call off the continuation of the trek? How did the strikers feel about the success of their demonstration thus far?

## Part 4 | July 1st, 1935

1. Describe the events of July 1st, 1935. How does the view of the events differ between the protesters and the police? Was it accurate to call it a 'riot'?
2. What was the consequence of the events for local businesses and the trekkers? Did anyone benefit from the riot?
3. What was the purpose of the Regina Riot Inquiry Commission? What was the conclusion the Commission came to? Are there any potential biases in the Commission? Do you agree with the Commission's findings? Why or why not?

## B. On-To-Ottawa! | Activities:

### Negotiation Table

During the visit of the trekkers' delegation to Ottawa, the government was never willing to negotiate. The meeting between the two groups was simply to give the authorities more time to find a way to disband the Trek. There was no room for negotiation.

Times have changed. Union representatives are now frequently in the position of discussing demands with their employers, including the private sector, public organizations and all levels of government. On this activity, students will be presented with an opportunity to develop negotiation skills. It is to be noticed that the exercise of these skills in a labour relations environment requires willingness to negotiate on all sides of the conflict.

Step One: The students will be taking part in a negotiation between the Canadian government and the Relief Camp strikers. Let them know that it will be a 'simulated' discussion—there were no fair conditions for negotiation in 1935.

Step Two: Arrange the class into groups of four to five students, make sure that there is an even number of groups. Assign at random which groups will be acting as the government and who will be the strikers.

Step Three: Have the student complete the Negotiation Worksheet. In their groups' students are to write an opening statement to the opposing side. The statement should be brief (3-4 sentences) and welcome the other group the negotiations.

Step Four: Groups should then brainstorm two "hard" demands which they feel they cannot leave the negotiating table without achieving, and three "soft" demand which they can negotiate freely with. For example: a "hard" demand for the strikers may be a workable wage of certain amount or the government could demand no unionizing, and a "soft" demand for the strikers could be paid sick days or the government could negotiate on the amount of days a week the camp workers would have off.

Note: If the students are struggling to come up with hard of soft demands, have them reflect on the conditions of the camp and the strikers demands.

Step Five: Groups should also come up with potential argument for why the opposing side should met their hard demands, and what possible solutions they are willing to accept for the soft demands.

Step Six: After the students have completed the Negotiation Worksheet, randomly assign a strikers group and a government group to negotiate their demands. Students should not share their Negotiation Worksheet with the opposing team.

Step Seven: Students should begin the negotiation with their opening statement and flip a coin to decide who states their demands first. Once the first group shares their first

demand the opposing group will have a minute to come up with a response. Negotiations may go back and forth until an agreement is reached. If a stalemate occurs where neither group is willing to concede a demand, the group should move on to the next demand.

Step Eight: Not all negotiations will finish at the same time nor will all groups have reached a decision on all their demands, but the negotiations should be concluded after an allotted time period. After the negotiations have ended have the students stay at the negotiating table and swap Negotiation Worksheets.

Step Nine: Host a class discussion on the negotiation exercise the students have just completed. Some questions for reflection may include:

- Was your group successful in negotiating your two hard demands? Why or why not?
- How did your demands compare to your opponents?
- What difficulties did you experience during these negotiations?
- What criteria do you need to have a successful negotiation?
- Why is it important to have both parties willing to participate in the negotiations?

# Negotiation Worksheet

Circle your group:

The Strikers

Canadian Government

## Hard Demands (Must be achieved during the negotiation)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why your opponent should meet this demand:

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why your opponent should meet this demand:

## Soft Demands (These demands can be modified during negotiations)

1. \_\_\_\_\_

Potential solutions:

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Potential solutions:

## Making Headlines

Step One: Play video three prior to this activity.

Step Two: Separate the class into groups of 3-4.

Step Three: Give the students the cut outs of all major headlines from the *Leader Post* from the night of the Regina Riot.

Step Four: Have the students try to place the article titles to the corresponding newspaper headline. The goal is to have students arrange the headlines chronologically, from the start of the riot to the end.

Encourage the students to use the knowledge gained from the video to make the best educated guesses.

Step Five: Once all groups have finished arranging their headlines, show the correct order of the headlines. Have groups compare their results with the answers, how many headlines were they able to get right?

## A Trekker's Testimony

Step One: After watching all four videos in this section, instruct the students that they will be participating in a Socratic seminar. A Socratic seminar is an open discussion where students critically engage with opposing arguments and new ideas.

Step Two: Have students read the testimony of Mike McCauley, a relief camp worker and participant of the On-To-Ottawa Trek. Instruct the students to take notes on McCauley's statement, encourage students to think critically about the information he provided. Students should make note of important details about McCauley and his involvement in the strike.

Step Three: After the students have read through McCauley's testimony, have students rearrange their chairs to form a circle.

Step Four: The teacher / facilitator will act as a mediator for the seminar by posing questions and mitigating disagreements if needed. Some questions to ask during the Socratic seminar are:

- Who was Mike McCauley?
- How does McCauley describe the conditions of the camps?
- What was McCauley's involvement in the Trek?
- What is your opinion of McCauley's character?

- Based on McCauley's testimony was the conclusion reached by the Regina Riot Inquiry Commission valid?
- Was McCauley's treatment by the RCMP justified given the circumstances?
- What conclusions can you draw from McCauley's testimony?
- Is McCauley a reliable witness?
- How could you support or corroborate McCauley's testimony?

